



Vaquita Porpoise

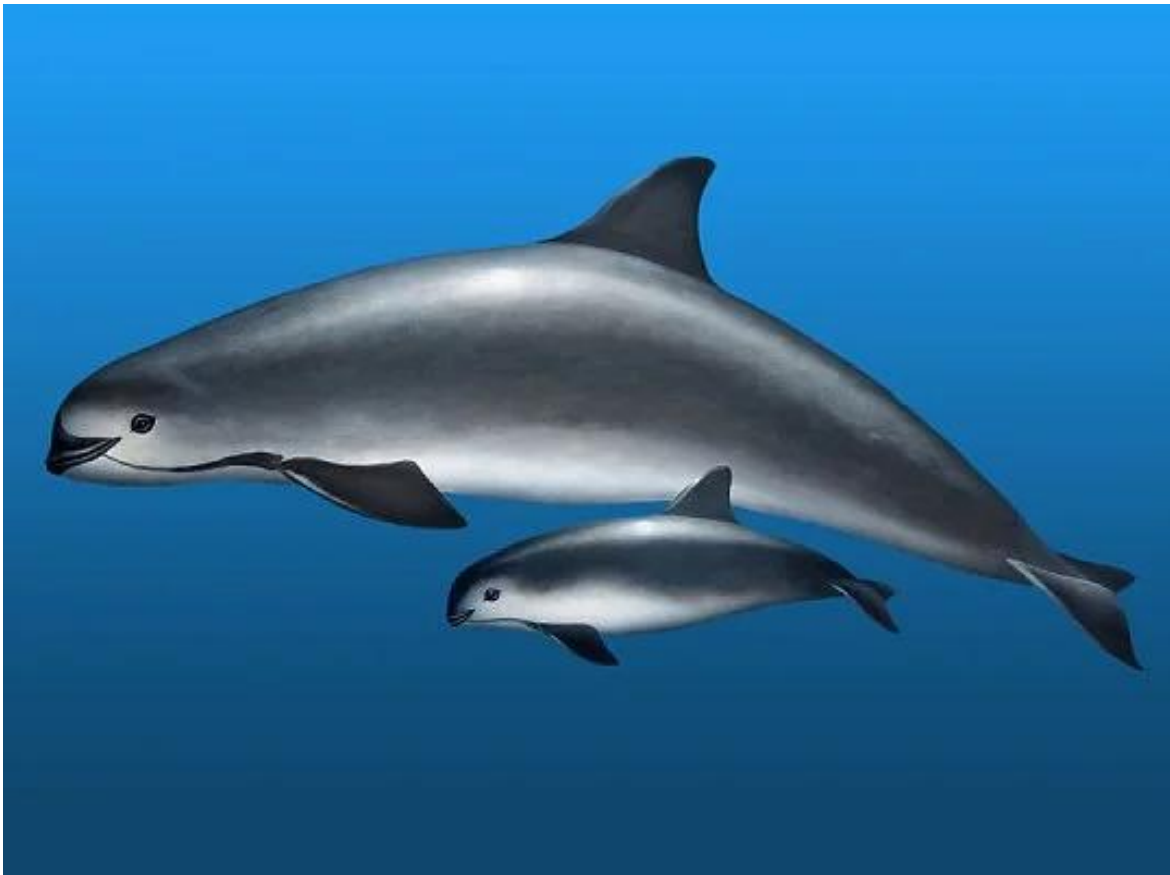
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A new report has highlighted that only about 10 **vaquita porpoise**, the world's **rarest marine mammal**, remain in the **Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez), Mexico**.

- Their numbers have plummeted due to **entanglement in illegal gillnets** used for catching **totoaba (an endangered fish prized for its swim bladder)**.

Vaquita Porpoise (*Phocoena sinus*)

- **About:** The **vaquita porpoise (little cow in Spanish)**, is the **world's most endangered marine mammal** discovered in 1958.
 - **Porpoises** are the **smallest members** of the **[cetacean family](#)** (whales, dolphins, porpoises) and are **distant relatives of dolphins**, diverging around 15 million years ago.
- **Habitat:** **Marine**, restricted to the **northern Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez), Mexico**, mostly in shallow waters up to **50 m deep**.
- **Physical Characteristics:** Vaquitas have **dark rings around the eyes**, dark patches on lips stretching to the fins. Newborns are darker with a gray fringe.
 - Their large dorsal fin helps release body heat in warm waters.
- **Behavior:** **Shy** and usually stay **near the shore**. They **avoid boats** and are mostly **solitary or in very small groups**, unlike other **cetaceans** that travel in large pods.
- **Threats:** **Bycatch in illegal gillnets** set for the vulnerable **totoaba fish**.
- **Protection Status:**
 - **[IUCN Red List:](#)** Critically Endangered.
 - **[CITES:](#)** Appendix I



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